

1 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A shipping management computer system, said shipping management computer system programmed to:

apply, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

2. A shipping management computer system, said shipping management computer system programmed to:

identify, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

3. A shipping management computer system, said shipping management computer system programmed to:

collect as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users a user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network; and

store in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the

1 particular user.

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3 4. The shipping management computer system of claim 3, said shipping
4 management computer system further programmed to:

5 collect as parcel specifications for a particular parcel user input from the particular
6 user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of
7 package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel;

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9 5. The shipping management computer system of claim 4, said shipping
10 management computer system further programmed to:

11 apply a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing
12 option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

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14 6. The shipping management computer system of claim 5, said shipping
15 management computer system further programmed to:

16 determine for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the billing
17 option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as applied to
18 the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by
19 the particular user.

20
21 7. The computer system of claim 6, said computer system further programmed
22 to:

23 calculate a shipping rate for shipping the particular parcel to be shipped by the
24 particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers
25 according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and according to a set of pricing
26 rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the
27 particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

28
29 8. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of

1 parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

2 applying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of
3 billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference
4 input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over
5 a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer
6 device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

7
8 9. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of
9 parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

10 identifying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each
11 carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by
12 the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the
13 computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each
14 user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global
15 communications network.

16
17 10. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of
18 parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

19 collecting as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users
20 a user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for
21 parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system
22 over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client
23 computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network;
24 and

25 storing in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record
26 comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the
27 particular user.

28
29 11. The method of claim 10, said method further comprising:

1 collecting as parcel specifications for a particular parcel user input from the particular
2 user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of
3 package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel;

4
5 12. The method of claim 11, said method further comprising:
6 applying a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing
7 option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

8
9 13. The method of claim 12, said method further comprising:
10 determining for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the
11 billing option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as
12 applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference
13 input by the particular user.

14
15 14. The method of claim 13, said method further comprising:
16 calculating a shipping rate for shipping the particular parcel to be shipped by the
17 particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers
18 according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and according to a set of pricing
19 rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the
20 particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

21
22 15. A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for
23 execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by
24 any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:
25 a set of program instructions for applying, in response to a request by any particular
26 user of a plurality of users, a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a
27 single billing option preference input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user
28 accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer
29 device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the

1 global communications network.

2
3 16. A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for
4 execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by
5 any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

6 a set of program instructions for identifying, in response to a request by any particular
7 user of a plurality of users, each carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular
8 billing option preference input by the particular requesting user for shipping a particular
9 parcel, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications
10 network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an
11 individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

12
13 17. A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for
14 execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by
15 any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

16 a set of program instructions for collecting as a billing option preference for each
17 particular user of a plurality of users a user input from the particular user of an identification
18 of a billing option preference for parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each
19 user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client
20 computer device, each user client computer having an individual electronic connection to the
21 global communications network; and

22 a set of program instructions for storing in a database a record corresponding to each
23 particular user, said record comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing
24 option preference for the particular user.

25
26 18. The computer program product of claim 17, said computer program product
27 further comprising:

28 a set of program instructions for collecting as parcel specifications for a particular
29 parcel user input from the particular user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least

1 one of: a package type, a set of package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular
2 parcel;

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4 19. The computer program product of claim 18, said computer program product
5 further comprising:

6 a set of program instructions for applying a set of billing option rules for each of a
7 plurality of carriers to the billing option preference and parcel specifications input by the
8 particular user.

9
10 20. The computer program product of claim 19, said computer program product
11 further comprising:

12 a set of program instructions for determining for each of the plurality of carriers
13 whether the carrier supports the billing option preference according to the billing option rules
14 for the particular carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the
15 billing option preference input by the particular user.

16
17 21. The computer program product of claim 20, said computer program product
18 further comprising:

19 a set of program instructions for calculating a shipping rate for shipping the particular
20 parcel to be shipped by the particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each
21 of the plurality of carriers according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and
22 according to a set of pricing rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the
23 parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the
24 particular user.